

Strategic Briefing: Structural Shifts Introduced by Executive Orders 14189 and 14239

(“Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness” & “Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response”)

1. Formal responsibility has been devolved. Actual control has not.

The federal government now holds states, local governments, and even individuals responsible for disaster preparedness. But it has retained sole authority to define risks, set priorities, and decide who receives support. This is not decentralisation — it is burden redistribution under central command.

2. Federal obligation has been quietly removed.

E.O. 14189 (*Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness*) abandons the long-established federal commitment to intervene in national crises. There is no longer a guarantee of federal assistance. States that do not align with federal definitions of risk or preparedness may be denied aid entirely.

3. The “all-hazards” model has been replaced with a politicised risk framework.

Decades of bipartisan emergency policy treated all major threats as warranting equal federal readiness — whether natural, technological, or manmade. E.O. 14189 replaces this with a “risk-informed” model where the federal government chooses which threats are worth preparing for. This redefinition opens the door to strategic neglect of politically inconvenient crises.

4. Key continuity and preparedness policies are now subject to rollback.

E.O. 14189 initiates a sweeping review of policies that have underpinned national disaster response and continuity of government since the Cold War. These include directives and executive orders spanning five administrations. Their future now depends on alignment with a partisan “resilience” strategy.

Deadline: The full policy review must be completed by **15 September 2025** by federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other relevant departments, as directed by Executive Order 14189.

5. A new threat-scoring apparatus has been established under federal control.

Executive Order 14189 establishes the National Risk Register, which will shape federal funding, infrastructure priorities, and even private-sector investment. It is based entirely on

how federal authorities choose to quantify threats. States and communities have no formal role in defining or contesting those assessments.

Deadline: The National Risk Register must be finalised by **15 November 2025** by the lead federal agencies, with the Department of Homeland Security expected to play a central role.

6. Support is now conditional — and potentially strategic.

Under Executive Order 14189, access to federal support can now be tied to compliance with federal definitions and performance metrics. States seen as non-compliant or uncooperative may be excluded. Resources may be redirected to private contractors or local jurisdictions with political alignment.

7. Wildfire policy has become the testing ground.

E.O. 14239 (*Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response*) frames state governments — specifically California — as negligent in wildfire preparedness. That framing justifies federal intervention and allows the administration to override state environmental rules, deploy federal teams, and centralise control over land management in politically opposed states.

Deadlines:

- **12 July 2025:** Federal agencies, including the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Defense, and Homeland Security, must coordinate and align wildfire strategies, including military asset integration.
- **10 October 2025:** Agencies must submit a full report to the White House detailing wildfire operations, funding structures, and proposed legislative changes.
- **8 February 2026:** Full implementation of the wildfire response framework is scheduled, including operational coordination, federal deployment protocols, and surveillance infrastructure.

8. Environmental deregulation is now embedded in disaster response.

E.O. 14239 calls for loosening federal rules on fire retardants, tree removal, and the use of forest biomass. These changes directly support E.O. 14179, which promotes timber extraction and infrastructure development. Environmental protection is recast as obstruction.

9. Military and surveillance infrastructure are now integrated into domestic emergencies.

Under E.O. 14239, the release of satellite surveillance data, the use of AI for predictive modelling, and the sale of military aircraft for domestic wildfire response have been authorised. These tools could also be used for monitoring population movement, land use, or dissent under the cover of disaster readiness.

10. Private contractors are being positioned above public responders.

Under both E.O. 14189 and 14239, federal response is increasingly directed through private firms — particularly those tied to national infrastructure projects and politically aligned interests. These contractors are less accountable to local oversight and less responsive to community norms. Public safety becomes a mechanism for patronage.

11. The Department of Justice is now involved in shielding infrastructure actors.

E.O. 14239 instructs the Attorney General to review legal cases involving power companies and wildfires. This creates a pathway for the federal government to interfere in state litigation — potentially protecting politically connected firms from accountability for public harms.

12. Governors can now be overridden — and publicly discredited.

Under E.O. 14239, the federal government can bypass state leadership through early intervention, centralised messaging, and tightly controlled federal operations. Governors may be excluded from key decisions, publicly blamed for failures, and stripped of both operational authority and public trust.

13. The wildfire response model is designed to scale.

Floods, hurricanes, extreme heat, and drought are all logical next targets for the model introduced by these Executive Orders. Each presents an opportunity to use the same template: define a crisis, assign blame, centralise control, insert private contractors, and reward compliance.

The most likely next phases:

- **Hurricanes and flooding:** Particularly in Gulf and Southeastern states during the August–November 2025 hurricane season.
- **Extreme heat and grid strain:** Especially in the Southwest during summer 2025.
- **Water scarcity and drought:** Particularly in Colorado River Basin states, expected to escalate through late 2025 and into 2026.

14. Disaster is being reframed as a governance strategy.

These Executive Orders do not simply restructure preparedness. They recast climate emergency and infrastructure strain as opportunities to consolidate power — step by step, under the legitimising language of reform and resilience.